

A cartoon mascot of a young boy with a friendly expression. He is wearing a light blue cap with a red pom-pom and a red circular emblem containing the letters 'CH'. He has a red long-sleeved shirt under a light blue vest. He is pointing his right index finger upwards and has his left hand on his hip. He is wearing red socks and dark shoes.

Cambria Heights Elementary School

**Guide to Standards-Based
Grading and Report Cards**

**Kindergarten & First Grade
2022-2023**

Overview

This guide serves to explain the standards-based grading and report cards for *Kindergarten* at Cambria Heights Elementary School. The report card is one of many important communication tools used to inform families of their child's progress with respect to the Pennsylvania Core Academic Standards and the CHES curriculum. Our goal is to transition to Standards-Based Grading for grades K-5 by 2026.

Cambria Heights School District knows that parents and families are our most valuable partners. This is especially true as the district continues to hold each learner accountable to more rigorous standards in each subject area and grade level. Achieving these high standards requires continuous progress monitoring and providing targeted support as needed. Like facilitators, parents need accurate and meaningful information, particularly about their child's strengths and areas where growth is needed.

Purpose

The purpose of a Standards-Based Report Card is to provide families with detailed information regarding each child's progress toward meeting grade-level standards and learning-related behaviors. The report card will communicate each child's learning successes and areas in which improvement or support is needed.

What is a Standards-Based Report Card?

A Standards-Based Report Card provides an accurate and detailed description of each child's progress related to the PA Core Academic Standards established by the PA Department of Education and the academic performance relative to the Cambria Heights School District's curricular benchmarks.

What are standards?

The PA Department of Education (PDE) has mandated a standards-based educational system. Standards are specific learning goals applied to all learners which contain consistent targets for learners to meet. For example, a Grade One Math standard might read, "Tells time to the half hour", while a Kindergarten English Language Arts standard might read, "demonstrates basic knowledge of one-to-one letter sound correspondence". Standards provide a focus for aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They are the general categories that organize knowledge within a content area. Each local school district in Pennsylvania develops curriculum aligned to the PA Standards. In the Cambria Heights Elementary School District, the local curriculum meets or exceeds these standards in all areas. Both the PA Standards and the CHSD curriculum are reflected on the Standards-Based Report Card.

The phrasing of each PA Standard has been rearranged into an "I can" statement in order to make each standard more kid and family friendly.

Grade level standards can be found at the PA Department of Education's Standards Aligned System Portal (SAS Portal): <https://www.pdesas.org/standard>

What are the major components of a Standards-Based Grading System?

- A Standards-Based Grading System has *clear performance standards* on levels of proficiency instead of points, percentages, or averages. Behavior, study skills, and habits of learning are reported separately using their own scales.
- *Formative assessments* are used more frequently to determine mastery or if more supports are necessary. Standards-Based Grading provides *multiple opportunities* for students to show evidence of learning.
- Learners play an active role in taking ownership of their learning through responding to *timely feedback*, *self-reflection*, and *self-awareness* without the penalty of a bad grade.

What information does the report card contain?

The report card will have specific learning targets that convey PA Core Standards for each grading period. These targets will describe what students should know and be able to do at their grade level. It will also contain information regarding characteristics of a successful learner and the student's attendance.

What do the indicators mean?

ME - Meeting Expectations: Student consistently meets grade level expectations. This is what all students should strive to achieve.

MP – Progressing Toward Expectations: Student is working toward meeting the grade level expectation but has not yet reached mastery. This indicator will be used often as many concepts are covered multiple times throughout the school year.

LP – Limited Progress Toward Expectations: Student is not meeting the grade level expectations. There is minimal understanding of the grade level skill or concept. More support is needed.

NA – Not Assessed at This Time: There are some standards that will be displayed on the report card; however, facilitators have not yet covered this material in class instruction.

How does a teacher evaluate a child's learning performance?

In our classrooms, the focus is on a learner's performance over multiple and varied learning opportunities, not simply the grading and averaging of quizzes and tests. Each

grading period provides learners multiple opportunities to rehearse and meet grade level benchmarks at Cambria Heights. Facilitators collect evidence of a learner's achievement through careful observations, examination of a learner's work, discussions, projects, performance tasks, quizzes, tests, and learner conferences. Facilitators record this data, analyze, and compile that information about each child's progress on a frequent basis, and finally use this information to evaluate each learner's progress toward each learning standard.

Why are letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) NOT used on these report cards?

At Cambria Heights, we want to place an emphasis on the continual learning process. To best convey a clear sense of what a child currently knows and what they still need to know, we need to be aware of where they are in specific areas within the curriculum. Facilitators have always kept record of this information, and traditional grading procedures had them averaging snapshot scores and grades to produce a letter grade that families have previously seen on the report card. A letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) or percentage merely tells the student and parent how he or she performed on average in a broad area such as Reading or Math, but typically does not provide the sort of feedback that fosters mastery learning or the intrinsic motivation to learn and grow in a specific area and to a specific standard.

The Standards-Based Report Card provides a clearer image of what occurs in the curriculum. The indicators of **ME**, **MP**, **LP**, and **NA** will follow each learning standard on the report card and provide more specific information about how well your learner is progressing to mastering a particular grade level standard.

What are the benefits of using a Standards-Based Report Card?

For Learners:

- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with state standards.
- Learners are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency.
- Learners can monitor their own progress toward achievement of specific targets.
- Specific feedback on progress helps build self-esteem, pride, and motivation.

For Parents:

- Report cards are less mysterious and have more meaning.
- They are a more accurate representation of a child's mastery of learning.
- Parents are aware of exactly what their child knows, and is able to do, and the next steps for progress.
- Parents know in what areas their child needs more support.
- Parents are empowered to increase their child's confidence and help their students set goals.

For Facilitators:

- Teachers know exactly where learners stand in their progress toward learning targets and what support needs to be provided.
- It provides aligned expectations and standards across grade levels in every subject.
- Standards-Based Report Cards allow facilitators to promote a growth mindset by creating a culture of learning versus earning, risk taking, and learning from mistakes.

What practices does a Standards-Based grading system eliminate?

Traditional grading methods and practices often lump behavior, study skills, and habits of learning in with academics by taking points off of assignments. Standards-Based Grading eliminates this lumping of concepts and allows us to emphasize behavior, study skills, and habits of learning more since they are reported and measured separately. It will allow parents to be able to see specifically if their child needs help with an academic concept or if he or she struggles with organization and turning work in on time, for example.

Standards-Based Grading also eliminates:

- Point penalties for late work, academic dishonesty, or attendance
- Extra credit point for things unrelated to standards
- Assigning group scores when learners engage in cooperative learning
- Curving class scores or grades
- Averaging a learner's assessment scores
- Assigning zeros to learner's work

How can parents support their child at home with the information communicated on the Standards-Based Report Card?

A key advantage to the Standards-Based Report Card is that it provides specific information to the parents. This information assists families in working with their child at home on identified skill areas, wither to support the school's efforts in educating the child to reach grade level expectations or to reinforce the school's efforts to move the child to deeper thinking.